

NOAA's
Community-based
Restoration Program

Stakeholder Meeting
Summary Report

September 13, 2005
Washington, D.C.



NOAA Restoration Center

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INTRODUCTION

Background

In September 2005, the NOAA Restoration Center's Community-based Restoration Program (CRP) held its first-ever national stakeholder meeting in Washington, D.C. The meeting, which was attended by 29 partners from around the country, provided an open forum for feedback on the Community-based Program. NOAA facilitators guided discussions around the following topic areas: revised program guidelines, technical assistance, restoration bottlenecks, and future programmatic priorities. This document summarizes the meeting feedback and recommendations and provides Restoration Center responses and supplementary information.

Contents

The summary is organized into six thematic sections and includes a list of meeting participants.

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I. RESEARCH AND MONITORING

Meeting Note Summary

Restoration project monitoring is a high priority among Community-based Restoration Program (CRP) partners because it 1) provides accountability for federal dollars spent, 2) improves restoration techniques and planning efforts, and 3) involves volunteers. Restoration success should be evaluated on a regional scale and over long time periods, not by success or failure of an individual project.

Minimum monitoring requirements, as described in the CRP guidelines, primarily address accountability issues. Minimum monitoring results can accurately assess project implementation (i.e. whether or not a project was completed and whether or not it met its short-term objectives), but they can not determine ecological success. Rigorous long-term monitoring of restoration projects is essential to determine ecological success, improve future restoration techniques, and evaluate long-term trends. Meaningful ecological monitoring can not be achieved under current grant time cycles or without increased appropriations.

Meeting Recommendations

- Identify additional sources of funds and technical support for monitoring (EPA, other NOAA offices, etc.) and regularly share this information with CRP partners. Provide additional funds for monitoring efforts.
- Promote restoration project monitoring as a valuable research endeavor for NOAA Science Centers, universities, etc.
- Provide a mechanism to fund limited amounts of meaningful long-term research/monitoring (including socioeconomic research) on a regional scale. Consider investing in a third party systematic or geographic approach to evaluate a number of sites over the long term.
- Develop feedback mechanisms to share monitoring results and lessons learned with CRP partners and the public, perhaps in the form of an annual report. There is increased efficiency and lower total investment if knowledge and techniques are transferred to and applied by other groups (replicated system).
- Provide technical expertise in developing monitoring plans and selecting appropriate standard methodologies to help grantees fulfill minimum monitoring requirements.

Current Actions/Response

- The Restoration Center (RC) is moving towards statistically valid sub-sampling of restoration projects for science-based monitoring in order to demonstrate project successes across CRP. The Restoration Center is currently funding monitoring efforts that evaluate multiple project sites in Maine and California to determine long-term restoration success in wetland and anadromous fish habitat, respectively. Results will be published and available on the RC website.

I. RESEARCH AND MONITORING

Current Actions/Response Continued

- We have considered other third-party systems for project monitoring in the past, and suggest project sponsors work with academia as much as possible to extend any monitoring efforts past the grant award period, particularly in light of the RC's 2006 budget, as it is unlikely that we can expand long-term monitoring or regional monitoring this year. We will continue to try to connect partners who implement restoration with those who can offer long-term monitoring expertise.
- An online monitoring tutorial is being developed in coordination with the NOAA Coastal Services Center. The tutorial will guide practitioners in developing a monitoring plan that meets the minimum monitoring guidelines established by the Restoration Center. This tutorial will not train grantees in monitoring techniques, but it will help them determine which techniques may be suitable to an organization's level of expertise and funding. Whether the resulting monitoring plan is scientifically rigorous will depend on the techniques chosen and how they are implemented; however, all monitoring plans developed under the tutorial will promote a basic level of critical thinking and guide practitioners to consider both structural and functional elements when developing their monitoring plans.
- The Restoration Center Research Program has also contributed to the development of a two-volume compendium of monitoring techniques for restoration projects ("Science-Based Restoration Monitoring of Coastal Habitats, NOAA Coastal Ocean Program, Decision Analysis Series No. 23, Vol. I-II, April 2005). These guidance documents will assist project sponsors in designing monitoring plans to meet the Restoration Center's requirements. To download a copy go to: http://coastalscience.noaa.gov/ecosystems/estuaries/restoration_monitoring.html
- We are exploring a partnership with the NOAA National Estuarine Research Reserve System (NERRS) to hold monitoring workshops to provide hands-on experience in various restoration monitoring techniques. As science-based monitoring is important to the RC and our partners, we would like to support three, 3-day trainings to be held at NERRS sites around the U.S. to help educate and implement the elements of the science-based guidance. Given the RC's 2006 budget, we may need to postpone the workshops and focus on ensuring the on-line tutorial is operational this year; we would also like to have regional open house events with RC field staff to help answer questions related to monitoring.
- Restoration Center staff are available to help develop monitoring plans. Please ask when you need advice or guidance!

II. REGIONAL PLANNING AND PRIORITIZATION

Meeting Note Summary

National and regional habitat restoration plans would 1) help define project and monitoring priorities, 2) allow funds to be allocated more deliberately, 3) help grassroots groups focus limited resources (funds, volunteers, etc.) in strategic locations, and 4) nest regional/local priorities into a national strategy. Socioeconomic data help capture true project value and should be incorporated into prioritization plans.

Meeting Recommendations

The Restoration Center should use its broad perspective (results from 1,000 funded projects, ecosystem-based management priorities, etc.) to set national restoration priorities and funnel this information into regional planning and priority setting.

- Work with partners (grantees, NGOs, Federal and state agencies, etc.) to lead the development of regional restoration plans that prioritize restoration projects.
- Develop a feedback loop so that CRP funds can be allocated more strategically and efficiently.
- Develop performance measures to capture true project values (include socioeconomic factors).

Current Actions/Response

- Restoration Center staff are currently working on a "big picture" prioritization method to rank habitat types (by region or sub-region) in order of restoration need so Restoration Center funds and efforts can be more strategically and deliberately applied. Elements in the draft prioritization method include 1) habitat condition and utilization, 2) human dimensions (i.e. socio-economics), and 3) technical feasibility and cost effectiveness. The first draft of the method is complete and one round of reviews has been solicited from RC field staff. After internal revisions an outside review by other NOAA and CRP partners is needed and will occur in 2006.
- An advanced performance measure is being developed that would compare on-the-ground expenditures (e.g. grants, contracts) to habitat priority and success. This type of performance measure would help show, from year to year, how the Restoration Center mobilizes on-the-ground funds to priority habitats, especially in those habitats that have shown successes. The first draft of this measure has been developed; monitoring/success, prioritization, and expenditure data will be run through the measure in FY06 as a test of the measure's validity.
- Once the prioritization method and science-based monitoring methods are implemented, the Restoration Center plans to work with partners to evaluate project results and identify priority habitat types. This information (and input from existing regional restoration plans) will feed into regional restoration plans. These discussions will occur in FY06.

II. REGIONAL PLANNING AND PRIORITIZATION

Current Actions/Response Continued

- Initiatives such as the Delaware Estuary Grants Program and Long Island Sound Futures Fund through the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, the Lower Columbia River Estuaries Partnership (which includes the Tillamook Estuary), and the Gulf of Maine Council Partnership are examples of CRP partner programs that provide opportunities to nest on-the-ground habitat restoration projects in large-scale prioritization strategies that meet local, regional and national goals and objectives.
- NOAA is also a key player in the National Fish Habitat Initiative, a nationwide strategy that harnesses the expertise of existing partnerships of state and federal agencies and conservation organizations to develop regional fisheries habitat restoration plans. See <http://www.fishhabitat.org/>.

III. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE NEEDS

Meeting Note Summary

The stakeholders commented on the positive attributes of Restoration Center staff including their helpfulness, accessibility, and initiative. These qualities are important because CRP funding recipients sometimes do not possess the technical expertise (engineering/design, permitting knowledge, etc.) to carry out all elements of a restoration project in full. NOAA RC staff provide partners with useful technical assistance including 1) front-end project design (site and restoration technique selection, pre-scoping proposals, permitting, compliance, minimum monitoring design, etc.), 2) relationship and network building between partners and other parts of NOAA, other federal and state agencies, other local NGOs, and grantees, and 3) hands-on project support (site visits, GIS support, etc.) and assistance overcoming obstacles (sharing past experiences, navigating permitting, etc.).

Meeting Recommendations

- Provide a list of the field staff's "areas of expertise" and services available.
- Support preliminary restoration phases (feasibility, engineering, etc.) by providing staff with specialized backgrounds (engineering, hydrology, geomorphology, etc.), by helping partners write RFPs for contractor services, by providing funding for assessment and design engineering, or by providing a floating contract for engineering.
- Hire more field staff to meet local restoration support needs.
- Facilitate information exchange between local restorationists. Hold annual (perhaps regional) "lessons learned workshops" for grant recipients. Hold week-long training programs about project design.
- Develop a searchable database ("Restoration Toolbox") of region/habitat specific information. A database could include informative web sites, lists of technical professionals and engineering services, NHPA Section 106 and NEPA requirements, GIS capabilities, etc.
- Increase investment in monitoring (including long-term).

Current Actions/Response

- *Restoration Center Staff and Technical Services* - A list of the Restoration Centers programmatic and technical field staff (including staff bios) is being developed and will be available to partners in 2006. Our staff map and contact list is currently available on the Restoration Center website at <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/habitat/restoration/contact.html>.
- The Restoration Center currently employs staff with expertise in: project engineering review, hydrogeomorphology, program management, river and wetland restoration, monitoring, GIS mapping, environmental compliance, shellfish restoration, and

III. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE NEEDS

Current Actions/Response Continued

- outreach. Restoration Center staff can help partners through initial project stages by coordinating with state historic preservation offices, and assisting with consultations under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) and Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) policies.
- Many of our granting programs and partner's programs currently provide funding for engineering and design (E&D) phases of restoration projects, provided that the work will result in either a final 100% design or a completed on-the-ground restoration project. During 2006, RC staff will be considering the separation of the "feasibility" phase, including design, engineering and initial compliance work, from the "implementation" phase of projects, in order to promote more developed and complete project proposals and improve our ability to answer NEPA-related questions.
 - Regional and headquarters Restoration Center staff endeavor to meet the technical needs of partners and grantees. With rapid program growth between 2000 and 2005, the Restoration Center increased the number of technical personnel throughout the country to help meet our partners' and grantees' needs. Recent efforts have increased staff in each region, including new full time staff hired in Gloucester, MA; Santa Rosa, CA; Silver Spring, MD; and St. Petersburg, FL. Limited funding in 2006 will necessarily prohibit further staff growth.
 - *Information Exchange* - The RC strives to facilitate information exchange between grantees and restoration practitioners on a regional basis. The RC has and will continue to provide technical guidance on an ad-hoc basis. Methods for transferring information to the public have included white papers (soil reconstruction and tide gates, salt marsh annotated bibliography), workshops on restoration techniques, and facilitated forums on specific habitats (oyster restoration in Oregon). Staff are currently planning the West Coast Native Oyster Restoration Summit for 2006. The RC will host regional stakeholder meetings in FY06, as time and budgets permit. These meetings will provide opportunities for information exchange and input on how the CRP program is working and how best to refine our policies, requirements, and services to suit the needs of our constituents. The first of these regional stakeholder workshops took place in Seattle in November. The major obstacle to continuing these technical assistance approaches is the lack of RC resources (funds and staff time for planning and follow-up).
 - The Restoration Center is involved in many ongoing activities to provide information to the restoration community. We currently support three searchable information systems: the National Estuaries Restoration Inventory (NERI) including an on-line GIS application (<https://neri.noaa.gov/>); Community-based Restoration Program funded project information (http://seahorse.nmfs.noaa.gov/rcdb/class/projects_main.html); and the USFWS Fish Passage Decision Support System (<http://fpdss.fws.gov>).
 - Updates to NOAA and Restoration Center websites are also planned to facilitate information exchange between restoration practitioners and to enhance program-specific information. The Restoration Center is also developing a Restoration Clearinghouse,

III. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE NEEDS

Current Actions/Response Continued

scheduled to be available on line by May 2006. While full functionality will develop over time, projected information includes: coastal habitats, ecology, biology and characteristics of resident organisms, history, value of restoration, monitoring, publications and resources, educational tools, volunteer information, human dimensions of restoration, and special restoration topics.

- On-line restoration tools in development include a wetland planting cost calculator, a salt marsh modeling system, and a restoration monitoring planning tool. On-line information for potential grantees will include region-specific funding opportunities, proposal templates, permit and consultation information and templates, and a GIS mapper for Restoration Center projects.
- For responses on increased investments in restoration monitoring see section I.

IV. FUNDING AND PROGRAM GROWTH

Meeting Note Summary

Partners expressed the need for more funding for the Community-based Restoration Program. At higher funding levels CRP could 1) fund more restoration projects, 2) increase money available for administrative work at the program and project level, 3) hire more technical staff, 4) develop strategies to keep pace with increasing costs of coastal property for project sites, and 5) increase long-term research and monitoring (including socioeconomic monitoring). Partners also emphasized the need for streamlining paperwork and reporting during both the application process and project period. While increased funding is essential, CRP should hold fast to its grass roots restoration approach and not abandon small locally initiated projects. CRP should maintain current focus on restoring coastal resources through community-based efforts and providing a combination of funding and technical expertise. These services produce a unique niche that does not greatly overlap with other agencies.

Meeting Recommendations

- Increase amount and flexibility in funding for above concerns (e.g. more on-the-ground projects, administrative costs, technical assistance, land costs, research and monitoring).
- Help partners tap additional funding opportunities, including other opportunities within NOAA.
- Cultivate state and private sector support for restoration efforts to facilitate the process of securing matching funds (an important driver in forming partnerships).
- Reward ongoing, successful projects to the same degree as those considered “new and innovative.”
- Allow flexibility in funding for “mini grants” to support projects proposed by smaller groups, or to fund specific portions of projects.
- Investigate other federal programs that use longer budget cycles (e.g. Department of Transportation).
- Increase awareness among partners of budget and solicitation cycles. Give consistent guidance on timing of funding, what is acceptable for match, and what NEPA information is required in proposals.
- Emphasize the importance of streamlined reporting.
- Develop a set of “Frequently Asked Questions” on the website to address common funding questions.

Current Actions/Response

- *Funding Growth* - The Community-based Restoration Program and many of its partners constantly strive to educate Congress on the benefits of community-based habitat restoration through press releases, dedication events, and other coordinated outreach efforts. Many funding recipients also pursue independent Congressional education, working with House and Senate staff from their own districts to demonstrate the results the CRP has helped them achieve. Since becoming a specific budget line in the FY00

IV. FUNDING AND PROGRAM GROWTH

Current Actions/Response Continued

budget cycle, the CRP had received increases in appropriations until this fiscal year (2006). The 2006 Congressional conference mark resulted in a funding level of \$13 million, which, although consistent with the President's Budget Request, represents a \$3 million decrease in CRP funding from 2005 levels. With decreased funding, it will be particularly important for CRP applicants to cultivate state and private sector funding and in-kind contributions to match NOAA funds.

- The Restoration Center's web page has a funding opportunities section that lists potential habitat restoration funding opportunities within other parts of NOAA, as well as with other public and private sources outside NOAA. This page clearly lists annual and semiannual application deadlines. These opportunities will continue to be posted as they are made public.
- *Streamlining Reporting and Paperwork* - As part of the federal e-government initiatives, grants processes are being streamlined government-wide through implementation of Public Law 106-107. One result of this is the availability of one-stop shopping for grants through www.grants.gov, the federal 'find and apply' web portal where applicants can find funding opportunities offered by 26 federal agencies. The FY06 grants process was the first year that CRP applicants were strongly encouraged to apply using [grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov), and many CRP applicants submitted successfully. Through [grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov), applicants receive an automatic response letting them know that a) their application was received and forwarded to NOAA CRP staff, or b) their application was not accepted due to late submittal or virus-infected files. Incomplete applications are not accepted by [grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov).
- In concert with [grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov), NOAA has recently released an electronic grants management system, Grants On-line. FY06 NOAA grant recipients will be provided electronic access to the system to manage their awards, as well as to request post-award actions. Recipients from prior fiscal years that have active awards will also be invited to use the system. Access to these recipients will be rolled out monthly over the coming year. Some CRP recipients are already using Grants On-line to manage their awards electronically, which saves paper and postage costs, and shortens processing times for post-award actions at the NOAA Grants Management Division. Many recipients have also been using the U.S. Treasury Department's Automated Standard Application for Payments (ASAP; <http://www.fms.treas.gov/asap/index.html>) system for accessing their grant funds. This system provides funding within 2-3 days and eliminates the need for paper reimbursement requests.
- Both the CRP review process and NOAA Grants Management Division (GMD) award process are tightly controlled by the Department of Commerce (DOC) as outlined in the DOC Grants and Cooperative Agreements Interim Manual (http://oamweb.osec.doc.gov/GMD_interimManual.html). Applicants that are contacted by NOAA and asked to modify aspects of their applications (e.g. start and end date,

IV. FUNDING AND PROGRAM GROWTH

Current Actions/Response Continued

budget, and occasionally scope of work) can assume their application is moving forward in the awards process. However, prior to approval of the selected project slate from the Financial Assistance Law Division, and subsequent approval from GMD, program staff are prohibited from notifying grant applicants of their status. In general, the proposal review and recommendation process takes a full 150 to 180 days after the solicitation deadline, as described in the full funding opportunity issued each fiscal year. Applicants are always welcome to call CRP staff to find out where their application is in the process. In general, rejection letters are sent out well in advance of award notifications, except for those few projects that are 'on the bubble' that could receive awards if funding became available later in the fiscal year. Such funding might be secured from other NOAA offices that choose to co-fund awards, as well as from CRP requests to reuse funds that occasionally become available due to incomplete or under budget projects. Positive confirmation that an applicant is to receive an award can only be provided by the NOAA Grants Management Division, in the form of an award document that requires a countersigned copy be returned to NOAA, signifying acceptance of Standard Terms and Conditions and any Special Award Conditions on the award.

- Reporting schedules are also defined by the DOC Grants and Cooperative Agreements Interim Manual. Progress reporting typically begins based on the start date a grantee has listed in their application, with reports covering activities within the first 6 months and semi-annually thereafter until the award expires. Financial reporting is timed with respect to the fiscal year calendar, so all financial reports cover the first and last 6 months of any fiscal year, which begins October 1st. Therefore, progress reporting and financial reporting dates typically do not run concurrently, unless a grantee has selected a start date of October 1st or April 1st to begin their projects. The CRP is exploring the potential to have progress reports for all new grants due on the same schedule as financial reports, regardless of start date, so that progress and financial reporting cover the same 6-month time periods. A pilot effort to test this approach with new CRP awards is expected in 2006. Since all reporting will be able to be accomplished electronically through Grants Online, this will require coordination with the development of electronic 'reporting reminder' functionality in Grants Online.
- *Match Requirements* - The CRP has enjoyed the success it has to date in part due to the significant leverage attained with its restoration awards. To maintain flexibility, a 1:1 match is suggested, but not required. However, match is included as part of the cost-effectiveness evaluation criterion for award decisions. Grantees have the flexibility to determine how they meet the suggested match level of 1:1, and can overmatch on project implementation funds to decrease the match needed for other areas such as education and technical assistance, for example. Grantees can also explain in their budget narratives why certain project aspects are difficult to provide match for, and can put forth applications with less than 1:1 match if necessary. Applicants that have

IV. FUNDING AND PROGRAM GROWTH

Current Actions/Response Continued

secured other federal funding are also able to demonstrate leverage to NOAA funds in their budget narratives. Even though federal funds cannot be used as formal match for application purposes, these funds are considered when reviewers evaluate the cost-effectiveness of a project proposal. The CRP is developing an internal policy to this effect specifically related to applications from American Indian Tribes, which have significant difficulty raising the suggested 1:1 non-federal match, but whom often have other sources of federal funding to contribute to a project.

V. INTERAGENCY COORDINATION/PERMITTING

Meeting Note Summary

Interagency coordination to prioritize habitats, make long-term funding decisions, and work through the permitting process, is necessary to maximize beneficial use of taxpayer dollars. Although the restoration project permitting process is complex, strong permitting rules ultimately result in better projects. However, the lack of interagency coordination and communication can cause frustrating project delays, especially during this permitting process.

Meeting Recommendations

- Work with other federal agencies (USFWS, Army Corps of Engineers, etc.) to eliminate “turf wars” and improve interagency coordination and communication (especially at the local level) to help speed up the permitting process. Promote a one-stop-shop for permits to streamline and centralize permits.
- Support training programs in project development at the local/regional level and support interagency workshops that address permitting roadblocks.
- Include a permitting phase in the grant application process and allow partners to use money to support project planning which will ultimately resolve many of the permitting issues.
- Provide grantees/applicants with list of resources for permit information and guidance on what information to include within proposals for National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).
- Broker interagency restoration projects and have an interagency review board to ensure increased cooperation and communication.
- Standardize all federal reporting requirements.

Current Actions/Response

- NOAA is developing a standardized, NOAA-wide questionnaire for use by applicable grant programs to assist potential grantees in providing sufficiently detailed information in the application stage to make a NEPA determination. If approved by the Office of Management and Budget, applicant responses to relevant questions will help streamline awards processing within NOAA.
- On a regional basis, the Restoration Center is working with various permitting and consulting agencies to develop and implement programmatic agreements that minimize the need for project-by-project agreements. For example, since 2001 the Restoration Center has been implementing programmatic Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) consultations with NOAA Fisheries Service in the southwest, northwest, northeast, and southeast regions. Also, in 2004 the Restoration Center’s northwest region completed a programmatic Biological Opinion with NOAA Fisheries Service that satisfies the consulting requirements on NOAA trust resources for many Restoration Center on-the-ground habitat restoration projects. Currently, the southeast region is working towards

V. INTERAGENCY COORDINATION/PERMITTING

Current Actions/Response Continued

completing programmatic National Historic Preservation Act agreements with appropriate State Historic Preservation Offices.

- Restoration Center staff will continue to be available to assist individual awardees in completing permitting actions, and staff will continue to develop workshops related to permitting issues for potential applicants. For example, Restoration Center staff have provided workshops to the nonprofit National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to facilitate information collection in order for NOAA to expeditiously complete NEPA documentation.
- Many of the interagency coordination recommendations provided at the CRP Stakeholder Workshop align with those expressed at the 2005 White House Conference on Cooperative Conservation (WHCCC; <http://conservation.ceq.gov/day3resources.html>). NOAA is actively engaged in the WHCCC Interagency Task Force that is looking closely at those recommendations and discerning how to address them.
- The Restoration Center has been actively meeting with its partner agencies to discuss how to better coordinate national and regional habitat restoration efforts. In July, 2004 NOAA hosted the Federal Symposium on Coastal Habitat Restoration (FSCHR), which brought together representatives from federal programs that either conduct or fund coastal habitat restoration activities. Based on Symposium discussions, a number of action items were developed, including: identification of current interagency work groups; development of a Who's Who in coastal habitat restoration; coordination of interagency restoration research and development; establishment of an interagency work group to refine the National Estuaries Restoration Inventory (NERI); and continued discussion/workshops on the initial themes addressed. These action items will continue to enhance interagency coastal habitat restoration coordination. The Restoration Center has taken initial steps on these actions by meeting with our partner agencies. In particular, the Restoration Center has been meeting with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service's (USFWS) Coastal Program and Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program to discuss reporting requirements, as well as opportunities for restoration project and priority-setting coordination. The RC will continue to conduct these meetings and reach out to other partner agencies involved in habitat protection and restoration efforts. At the regional level, Restoration Center staff have coordinated quarterly meetings since 2004 with state and federal agencies that provide funding for habitat restoration in central California. The RC would like to expand this model to additional states and regions.

VI. OUTREACH AND EDUCATION

Meeting Recommendations

- Increase educational and career (internship) opportunities for students (especially minority students) to be engaged in natural science.
- Collaborate with NOAA Education Office and other educators to promote habitat restoration messages to adult decision-makers.
- Increase accessibility to “how to” manuals and guidance documents.
- Create web-based resources for Frequently Asked Questions for grantees.

Current Actions/Response

- NOAA has an active partnership with the Educational Partnership Program which provides scholarships and internship experiences to students attending minority serving institutions (MSI). Last year, under this program, NOAA’s Habitat Office actively pursued local universities to develop partnerships for research and monitoring at NOAA-funded restoration projects. Under the Habitat Office, the Restoration Center hopes to continue this partnership and grow it in the future.
- In FY05, NOAA’s Office of Education and Sustainability solicited education project proposals under the Environmental Literacy Grants Program. The Restoration Center advertised this opportunity widely through its partner networks. In FY06, we would like to further support our partners in developing joint proposals for these funds since feedback from the Education Office indicated that national projects were more competitive than regionally focused projects.
- Revising the Restoration Center website is a top outreach priority for FY06 and developing a useful “Frequently Asked Questions” page will be part of that effort. See the Technical Assistance Needs section for more information.

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